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THE
Ruins of Gour.

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THE
Ruins of Gour
DESCRIBED,
AND
REPRESENTED IN EIGHTEEN VIEWS;
WITH
A TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP

COMPILED
FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS AND DRAWINGS OF THE LATE
H. CREIGHTON, Esq.

LONDON.

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P R E F A C E.

Mr. HENRY CREIGHTON, from whose drawings and observations made on the spot, this book has been compiled, was the son of a native of Scotland, settled in Sunderland. In the year 1783, when still very young, he entered as a mercantile assistant into the service of Charles Grant, Esq. who at that time was in Bengal, and holding the important office of Commercial Resident at the East India Company's factory in the district of Malda, for providing silk and cotton piece-goods and raw silk; the head station of which was within a few

miles of the site of *Gour*. Mr. Grant having established a manufactory of indigo at a place called Gowmalty, situated absolutely among the ruins of that famed city, employed Mr. Creighton to superintend it; and there he remained from the year 1786 until his premature death, which took place in the year 1807, about the 40th year of his age.

Mr. Creighton was of an amiable disposition, and of an exemplary life, being a strict observer of his religious as well as moral duties, in a quarter where there were no established public means of divine worship or instruction. He was a married man, and left a widow and seven children to deplore his loss, and feel the want not only of his affectionate and fostering care, but even of his support in a pecuniary sense; for the calls of a large family upon an inadequate income

income precluded the possibility of his making more than a very scanty provision for them upon his death.

As the profits of this work are intended for the sole benefit of the widow and children of its worthy and ingenious Author, it is sincerely to be hoped that it will receive the liberal and benevolent patronage of the Public.

THE
RUINS OF GOUR.

THE Site of the City of *Gour* is now an uninhabited waste on the eastern side of the *Ganges*, running nearly in a direction with it from S.S.E. to N.N.W. The extent of the city appears, from the old embankments, (which enclosed it on every side) to have been ten miles long, and from one to one and a half broad. The banks (some of which are faced with bricks) were sufficiently capable of guarding it from floods, during the height of the rivers, when the adjacent country was inundated; as well as a good defence to the place, being mounds of earth from thirty to forty feet in height, and one hundred and thirty to two hundred feet in breadth at the base, with broad ditches on their outside. On the eastern extremity there are two embankments, two hundred feet broad, running parallel to each other, at five hundred and eighty

B

feet

feet asunder ; probably for greater security against a large lake in that quarter, which, in stormy weather, is driven with great force against the bank, during the season of the inundations. The passes through the banks had high gateways, of which one at the south, and another at the north end, (*vide Plate II. and IV.*), are still standing, and the remains of others, that have been destroyed, are still clearly to be ascertained. Two grand roads have led through them, the whole length of the city, raised with earth, and paved with brick, terminating with the *Cutwaly Gate*, (*Plate IV.*) at the south end, and which, passing through other gates in the intermediate banks, lead through the northernmost bank, as described in the map. Where drains and canals intersect the roads, there are remains of bridges built over them. (*Plate XIII.*)

The mosques have been very numerous, the rubbish and stones of which still remain, and serve to point out the places where they stood. Two of them, distinguished by the natives with the epithet of "*Golden*," (*Plate V. and VI.*), were, undoubtedly, the best buildings of that kind.

The Fort, or Palace, is rather less than a mile in length, and not quite half a mile broad, enclosed with a bank or rampart of earth, forty feet high, with bastions, and has a deep ditch surrounding it. The gate at the entrance into it, on the
north

north side, is still standing, and called by the natives, the *Dákhil Gate (Plate II.)* Within this enclosure is part of a brick wall, forty-two feet high, which surrounded a space seven hundred yards long, by three hundred wide, parted into three divisions, supposed to have contained the King's apartments, with gates leading to them. Within it also some remains of *Sháh Husain's* tomb are still visible (as in *Plate VIII.*), but covered with trees, and full of bats and reptiles, as the ditches and reservoirs are of alligators.

The whole of this extensive boundary, including the city and fort, is furnished with innumerable tanks, or ponds, of various sizes, and intersected with drains and ditches in every direction. In forming these, the earth thrown up raised the ground considerably above the level country on which they built their houses, precisely similar, in this respect, to the cities and villages of *Egypt*; while the excavations plentifully supplied them with water for every purpose. These excavations being generally full of water, overgrown with grass and reeds, and much infested with alligators, render the whole site nearly impassable, during the rainy season; but, in the dry season, when the grass is burnt, the whole enclosure becomes perfectly accessible. The water is very good, but propagates such swarms of musquitos, as to render the stay among the ruins after sun-set impossible. The *Ságar Diggy*, a reservoir one mile in length by half a mile in breadth,

is a work of great labour; and there are two other pieces of water of nearly equal dimensions in the place. There is one tank, where they make offerings to the alligators, which are so tame, or so bold, that they come at once to the shore for what is offered them. Bricks are every where scattered over the ground, and by the operation of ploughing become gradually mixed with the soil.

Beyond the boundary of the city, a smaller embankment has been carried forward in a southerly direction, on the western side next the *Ganges*, for seven miles further, in which space are also found mosques, tanks, and other signs of human habitation; and the same indications are evident for two miles to the northward, forming a kind of suburb at each end, which altogether made an extent of continued population, for nineteen miles long, by a mile and a half wide. (*See Map.*)

In passing through so large an extent of former grandeur, once the busy scene of men, nothing presents itself but these few remains. Trees and high grass now fill up the space, and shelter a variety of wild creatures, bears, buffaloes, deer, wild hogs, snakes, monkeys, peacocks, and the common domestic fowl, rendered wild for want of an owner. At night the roar of the tiger, the cry of the peacock, and the howl of the jackals, with the accompaniment of rats, owls, and troublesome

some insects, soon become familiar to the few inhabitants still in its neighbourhood.

The *Ganges* formerly ran close to it, and its departure is easily accounted for, the soil to the westward being light and sandy, through which the river runs, continually shifts, filling up the place it has left with new land. The present distance from *Gour* to the *Ganges* is nine or ten miles, but in one direction it has within the last five years (preceding 1801) approached three or four miles nearer, causing the natives, whose lands are cut away, to resort to the wastes of *Gour* itself, who have brought some parts of it into cultivation ; but it is unhealthy where they attempt to settle upon it. *Rajemahl*, *Málda*, and *Murshidábád*, for centuries have been supplied from hence with materials for building ; and bricks and stones are continually carried away to other parts of the country, on carts, bullocks, and in boats, by the natives, for the purpose of modern edifices.

The late *Mr. Reuben Burrow*, who visited these ruins in the year 1787, gives the following description of them in his journal, the manuscript of which is deposited in the Library of the East-India Company :—

“ *Gour* is an enormous heap of ruins, but seems rather to
 “ have been destroyed by the removal of the materials for
 “ other

“ other purposes than by time. The fields about it have their
 “ soil composed, in effect, of nothing but broken bricks, and
 “ those bricks have been so well made and burnt, that the
 “ marks of the fingers of the makers are still to be seen on
 “ many of the pieces. There are five large gates of the city
 “ still remaining, besides some beautiful entrances to the
 “ tombs of the ancient princes, and mosques, &c. These
 “ tombs were, not long ago, in perfect order, and were held
 “ in a manner sacred, till they were torn to pieces, for the
 “ sake of the stone; indeed, such of the gates as happened
 “ to have no stone in them, are almost perfect, but wherever
 “ a piece of stone has happened to be placed, the most elegant
 “ buildings have been destroyed to get it out, so that there
 “ is now scarce a piece left, except a part in the round tower,*
 “ which happens to have been preserved by the peculiar
 “ construction of the building. To this tower I reduced my
 “ observations, the result of which was as follows:

“ Latitude of the *Round Tower* at *Gour* $24^{\circ} 53' 0''$ N.

“ Longitude - - - - - $5^{\circ} 52' 18''$ E.

“ The latitude was deduced from twenty-nine meridian
 altitudes, and the longitude partly from distances and partly
 from the watches.

See Plate I.

“ The

“ The ramparts of the fort are exceedingly high, and there
 “ seems to have been brick buildings on the top of them, though
 “ at present there are scarce any remains of them above ground.
 “ There are yet some standing walls, between thirty and forty
 “ feet high ; but the whole place is covered with trees and
 “ brambles, so thick, as to be totally impassable in many
 “ places ; and there are so many tigers and wild hogs, as to
 “ make it dangerous to go among the ruins. The place too
 “ is infested with large black muscatoes, which are totally
 “ different from the common ones, and infinitely more
 “ troublesome. *Gour* was probably near the *Palibothra* of
 “ the ancients.

“ A great part of the city of *Gour* is situated close on
 “ the banks of a rivulet, called the *Bhágíratí*, the estimated
 “ breadth of which is from forty to ninety-five yards ; but
 “ the *Ganges* sometimes advances so near as to obliterate a
 “ part of this rivulet in its course.” (See Map.)

Major *Rennell*, in his *Memoirs* of a map of *Hindostan*,
 page 55, London, 1788, in speaking of *Gour*, says as follows :
 “ *Gour*, called also *Lucknouti*, the ancient capital of *Ben-*
 “ *gal*, and supposed to be the *Gangia regia* of *Ptolemy*,
 “ stood on the left bank of the *Ganges*, about twenty-five
 “ miles below *Rajemal* (latitude $24^{\circ} 53'$, longitude $88^{\circ} 14'$).
 “ It was the capital of *Bengal* 730 years before Christ
 “ (Dow,

“ (*Dow*, 1st. 6.) and was repaired and beautified by *Akbar*
 “ (A. D. 1575) who gave it the name of *Jennuttabad*, which
 “ name a part of the *Circar*, or district, in which it was
 “ situated, still bears. According to *Ferishta*’s account, the
 “ unwholesomeness of its air occasioned it to be deserted
 “ soon after (some of its present inhabitants told me it was
 “ deserted in consequence of a pestilence), and the seat of
 “ government was removed to *Tanda* or *Tanrah*, a few miles
 “ higher up the river.

“ No part of the site of ancient *Gour* is nearer to the
 “ present bank of the *Ganges* than four miles and a half,
 “ and some parts of it, which were originally washed by that
 “ river, are now twelve miles from it. However, a small
 “ stream that communicates with the *Ganges*, now runs by
 “ its west side, and is navigable during the rainy season.
 “ On the east side, and in some places within two miles, it
 “ has the *Mahánadi*, which is always navigable, and com-
 “ municates also with the *Ganges*.

“ Taking the extent of the ruins of *Gour* at the most
 “ reasonable calculation, it is not less than fifteen miles in
 “ length (extending along the old bank of the *Ganges*), and
 “ from two to three in breadth. Several villages stand on
 “ part of its site: the remainder is either covered with thick
 “ forests, the habitations of tigers and other beasts of prey,
 “ or

“ or become arable land, whose soil is principally composed
 “ of brick dust. The chief ruins are, a mosque lined with
 “ black marble, elaborately wrought; and two gates of the
 “ citadel, which are strikingly grand and lofty. These fabrics,
 “ and some few others, appear to owe their duration to the
 “ nature of their materials, which are less marketable, and
 “ more difficult to separate, than those of the ordinary brick
 “ buildings; which have been, and continue to be, an article
 “ of merchandize, and are transported to *Murshadábád*,
 “ *Málda*, and other places, for the purpose of building. These
 “ bricks are of the most solid texture of any I ever saw, and
 “ have preserved the sharpness of their edges, and smooth-
 “ ness of their surfaces, through a series of ages. The situa-
 “ tion of *Gour* was highly convenient for the capital of
 “ *Bengal* and *Bahar*, as united under one government, being
 “ nearly central with respect to the populous parts of
 “ those provinces, and near the junction of the principal
 “ rivers that compose that extraordinary inland navigation,
 “ for which those provinces are famed; and moreover,
 “ secured by the *Ganges* and other rivers, on the only part
 “ from which *Bengal* has any cause for apprehension.”

Gour, by which title these ruins are best known to Euro-
 peans, is properly the name of the district in which they are
 situated. Before the year 1202-3 of the Christian æra,
 when *Bengal* fell under the power of the *Afghan*, *Muhammad*
 c *Bakhtiyar*,

Bakhtiyar, of the tribe of *Khulijy*, the city was called *Lakshmanavati*, which the vulgar have corrupted into *Lucknouti*. Of its topographical or political history, before that period, little has been recorded which can be depended upon. It appears from the excellent History of *Bengal*, which has recently issued from the pen of the able and learned Professor of Oriental Languages in the East India Company's College in *Hertfordshire*, *Charles Stewart*, Esq., that *Bakhtiyar* chose *Lucknouti* for the chief seat of his government, and that many of his successors, as kings and governors of *Bengal*, made it their capital. That it continued a great and opulent city, till about the middle of the sixteenth century of our æra, we learn from *Manuel de Faria y Sousa's* History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese, which says, "*Gour*, the principal city of *Bengal*, is seated on
 " the banks of the *Ganges*, three leagues in length, con-
 " taining one million and two hundred thousand families,
 " and is well fortified. Along the streets, which are wide
 " and strait, are rows of trees to shade the people, who are
 " so very numerous, that sometimes many are trod to
 " death."

A few silver coins, bearing the names and titles of the independent sovereigns of *Bengal*, have been occasionally found among the ruins of *Gour*, some of which have been deposited in the library at the East India House. The inscriptions,
 with

with one exception, are in the *Arabic* character, but so defaced, as to be in some parts illegible ; which circumstance is chiefly owing to a practice, still prevalent among the bankers and merchants of *India*, of stamping their own private mark on every piece of money that passes through their hands. The weight of those coins is considerably less than that of the *Sicca* rupee, now current in *Bengal*. The following is a list of them, arranged according to the succession of the sovereigns in whose names they were coined.

1. A silver coin, bearing the name of *Danuja Madana Déva*. N. B. There is no date on this piece, and it is uncertain whether he reigned at *Gour*, as his name, which is *Hindu*, is not found among those of the independent kings of *Bengal*.

2. A ditto of *Shams'ud-din Iliás Sháh*, who, according to *Stewart's History of Bengal*, began his reign A. H. 743, or A. D. 1342. The date on the coin itself, as is the case with most of the others, is not legible.

3. A ditto of *Sikandar Sháh*, son of *Iliás Sháh*, who began his reign A. H. 760, or A. D. 1358.

4. A ditto of *Ghayás'ud-din Aazam Sháh*, who commenced his reign A. H. 769, or A. D. 1367.

5. A

5. A ditto of *Saif'ud-din*, called also in *Stewart's History*, *Sultán'us-sulatin*, who began his reign A. H. 775, or A. D. 1373.

6. A ditto of *Jalál'ud-din Muhammad Sháh*, who began to reign A. H. 794, or A. D. 1392.

7. A ditto of *Ahmad Sháh*, son of *Muhammad Sháh*, who commenced his reign A. H. 812, or A. D. 1409.

8. A ditto of *Shaháb'ud-din Násir Sháh*, who began his reign A. H. 830, or A. D. 1426.

9. A ditto of *Shams'ud-din Muzafar Sháh* The date on the coin is A. H. 892, or A. D. 1487.

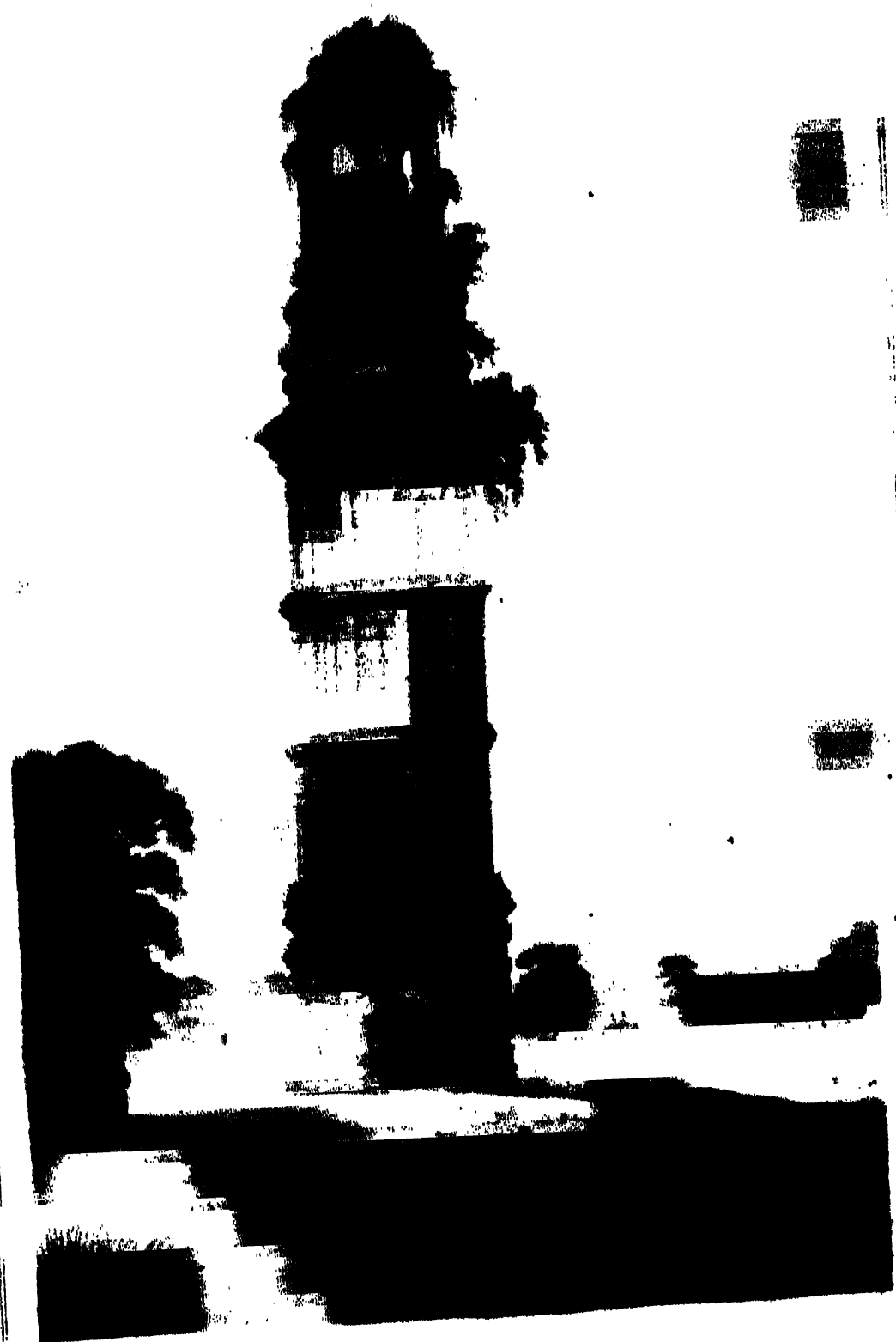
10. A ditto of *Iusain Sháh*, who began to reign A. H. 905, or A. D. 1495.

In *Stewart's History*, the names and titles of these princes differ somewhat from those attributed to the same persons in the above list, which were taken from the coins themselves.

No. I.

THE TOWER.

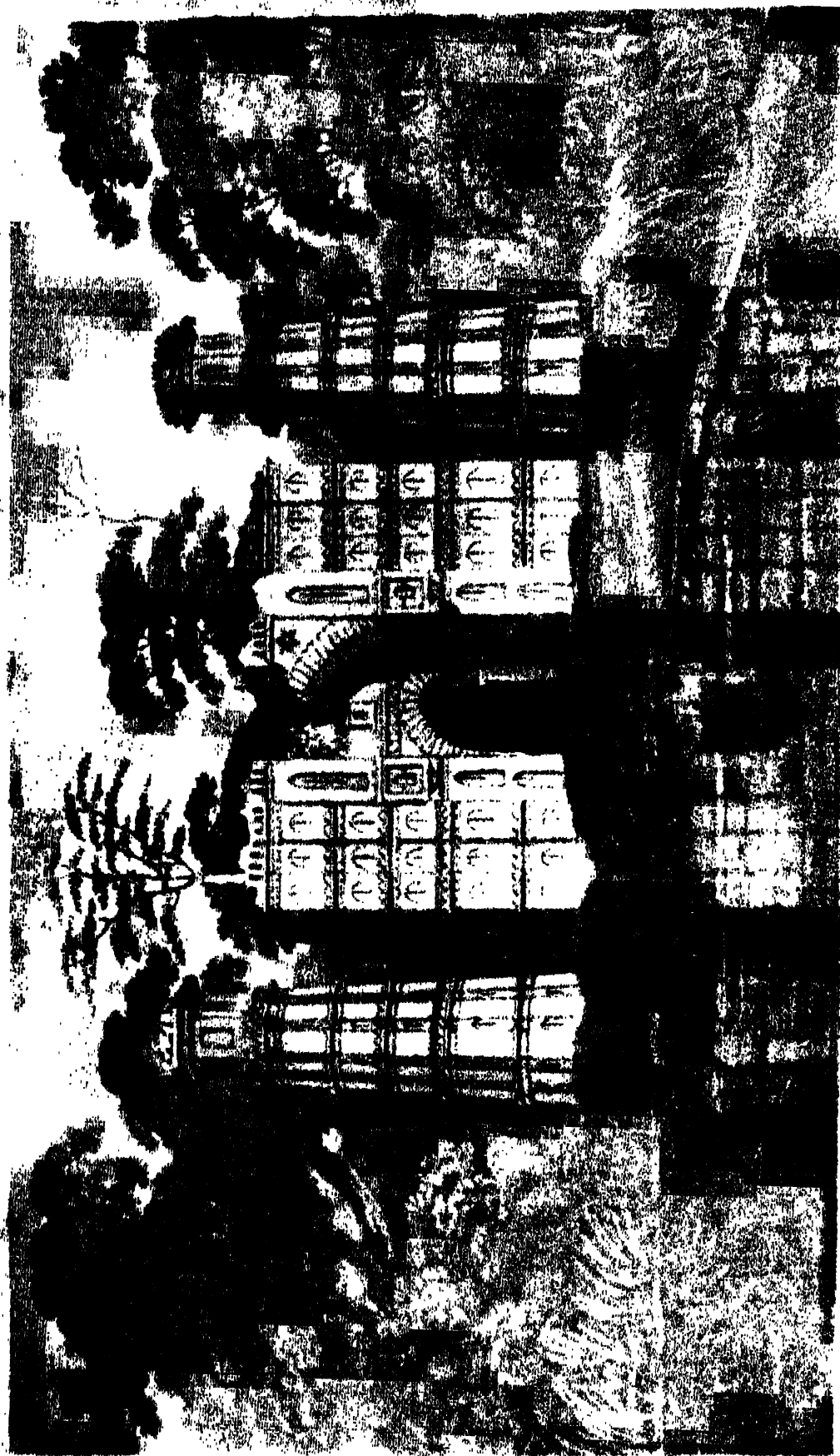
THIS Minaret, or Tower, is said to have been erected by *Firoz Sháh*, one of the independent kings of *Bengal*, who reigned at *Gour*, at the latter end of the fifteenth century. It is built of stone and brick ; is about ninety feet in height, and twenty-one feet in diameter, at the base. It is hollow within, and is furnished with a flight of stone-steps to the cupola at the top, where there is a landing place. The late *Mr. Reuben Burrow*, who visited these ruins in the year 1787, says, in his journal, that he reduced his astronomical observations to this tower, and determined its situation to be in $24^{\circ} 53'$ of north latitude, and $5^{\text{h}} 52' 13''$ of east longitude.—See *Stewart's Hist. of Bengal*, p. 106.



NO. II

THE DÁKHIL GATE

THIS magnificent structure is on the north side of the fort, to which it forms the entrance through the rampart. The height of the arch is thirty-four feet, the extreme height forty-eight feet, and of the towers at the corners fifty-three feet. The passage through it is one hundred and seven feet by fourteen feet; and it is furnished with an extensive lodgement on each side, now the habitation of innumerable bats. It was probably built in the reign of *Barbek Sháh*, about A. H. 871, or A. D. 1466. It is called *Dákhil*, because it is the principal *entrance* to the fort.—See *Stewart's Hist. of Béngal*, p. 100.

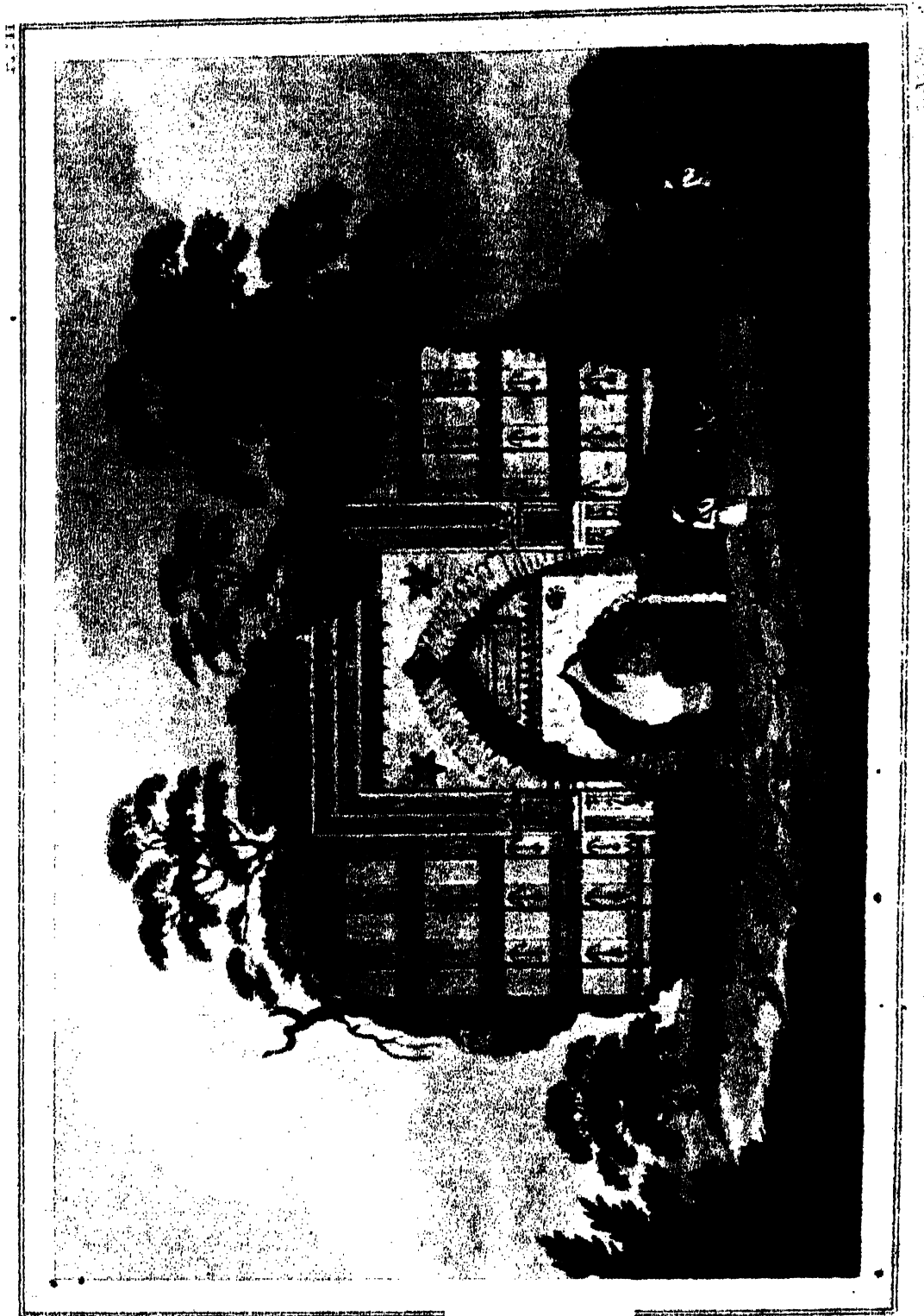


THE DANKH. GATE

No. III.

THE CHÁND GATE.

THIS Gateway is within the fort, after passing through the *Dákhil* Gate. It is formed of brick and stone, in a magnificent style of Muhammadan architecture; and, from Arabic inscriptions found near the spot, it appears to have been erected, together with the palace, on the road to which it stands, in A. H. 871, or A. D. 1466. The extreme height of this gateway is forty-eight feet, and that of the arch thirty-two feet.—See *Stewart's Hist. of Bengal*, p. 100.



THE CHAND GATE

No. IV.

THE CUTWÁLY GATE.

THE situation of this Gateway is on the south side of the city, being the entrance through the great bank. It is altogether forty feet high, and the height to the point of the arch is thirty-one feet. The view was taken from the outside, south. There is no inscription from which the date of its erection might have been ascertained. The literal signification of the name of this gate is, the gate of the *Cutwál*, or chief Officer of the Police.

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From the copy of an *Arabic* inscription, beautifully cut in stone in the *Toghra* character, some years since attached to this building, it appears to have been founded in A. H. 932, corresponding with A. D. 1525, by *Sultan Nasarat Sháh*, son of *Sultan Husain Sháh*, son of *Sayad Ashraf*, surnamed *Husaini*. A great proportion of the ornamented parts of this mosque have of late years been taken away.—See *Stewart's Hist. of Bengal*, p. 114.

THE SUNA MASJID, or GOLDEN MOSQUE.

THIS is the best and the largest Building remaining. Its outward dimensions are one hundred and seventy feet long by seventy-six feet broad, and twenty feet high, (exclusive of the domes, which rise ten feet above the roof), and the walls are eight feet thick. The entire length of that side represented in the view, and which may be called the front of the edifice, is formed of a beautifully sculptured dark grey stone, approaching to black, of the hornblende species; and contains eleven open arches, each fourteen feet high, eight feet through, and eight feet and a half wide, by which you may pass to the interior. Within these arches are eleven others, forming with them an aisle, covered by eleven domes. In the back wall, opposite each archway, was a stone niche highly ornamented; and at one end a gallery of sculptured hornblende. Twenty stone pillars, in two rows, divide the area within the arches into three other aisles, covered with thirty-three domes; so that there are in all four aisles covered by forty-four domes. The situation of this ruin is to the north of the fort, within a spacious court, formed by a stone wall, with three gateways.

From



NO. VI and VII

THE CHUHA-SUNA MASJID, OR SMALL GOLDEN MOSQUE.

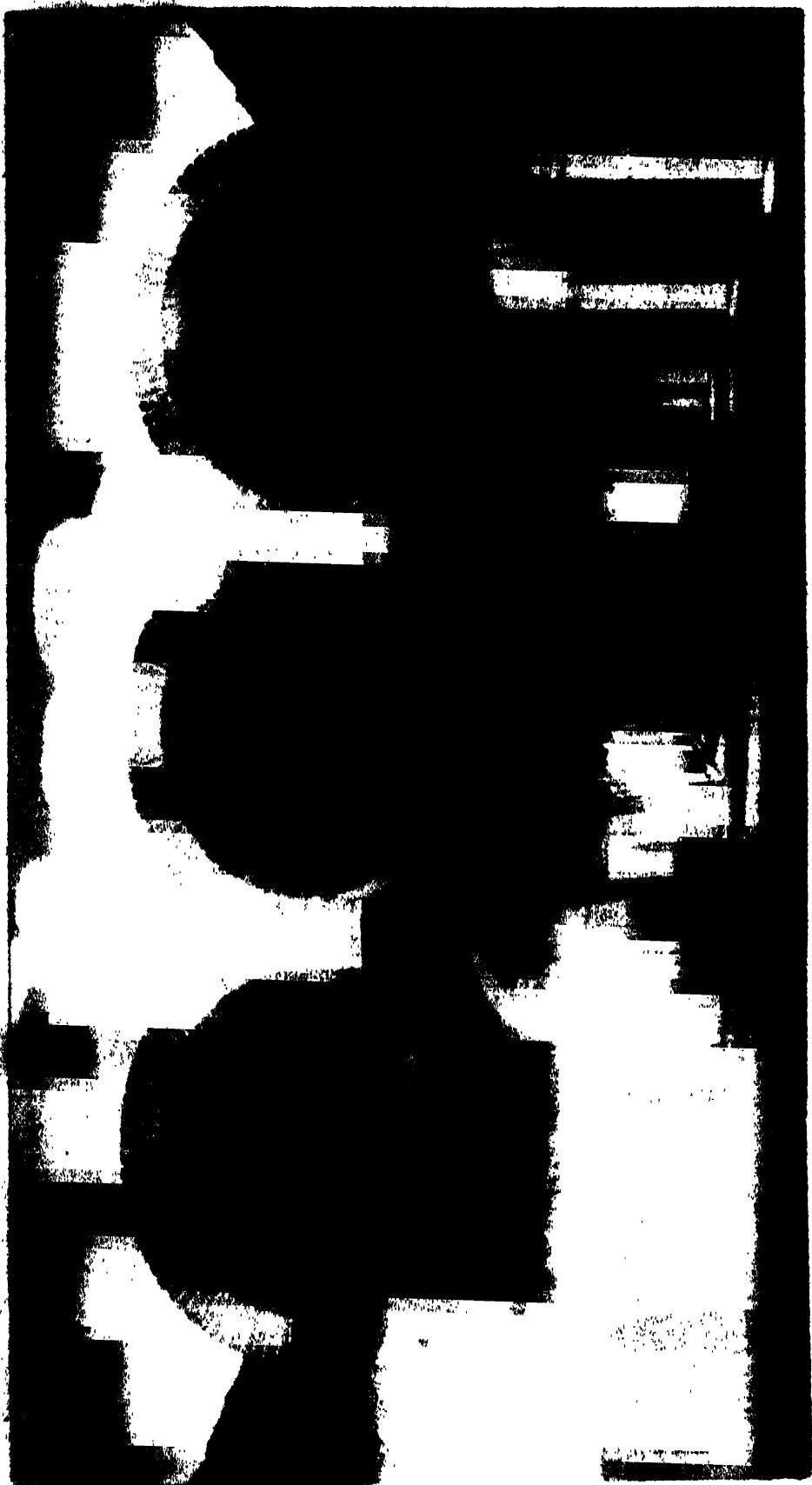
THIS edifice is about seventy-seven feet long by fifty-eight feet broad in the exterior. It appears to have been founded in the reign of *Sultan Husain Sháh*, by *Muhammad*, the son of *Ali*. The interior is divided into three aisles, by arches, and the whole covered with domes. The area of the inside forms a parallelogram of fifty-three feet by forty-one and a half feet. The height of the arches is twenty feet, over which the domes rise ten feet. The sculpture on the left hand is in black hornblende, and the remains of gilding upon it is still visible, and may account for the epithet of *golden* given to this and the former edifice. The stone used in these mosques had formerly belonged to *Hindu* temples destroyed by the zealous *Muhammadans*, as will be evident from an inspection of Plates XVI. XVII. and XVIII. representing four slabs taken from this building.



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No. VIII.

THE TOMB OF SHA'H HUSAIN.

A SPACIOUS area within the gateway, represented in the annexed Plate, was a royal burying place, where some years since were to be seen the tombs of two of the kings of *Gour*, one of which was that of *Husain Sháh*, and the other of *Nasarat Sháh*. The gateway and the surrounding walls were cased with bricks, curiously carved, and beautifully glazed blue and white, in the manner of Dutch tiles in Europe. The greatest part of the materials which formed these tombs have now disappeared. Mr. *Orme*, the historian, who many years since visited these ruins, tells us, that they were removed by a Captain *Adams*, for the use of some public works in Fort William; and that there were then lying by the waterside ready for transportation, five pieces of black stone, highly polished, each measuring twelve feet in length, and two feet in breadth and thickness, which formed part of the steps. It appears from *Stewart's History of Bengal*, that *Husain Sháh* died at *Gour*, A. H. 927, or A. D. 1520; and that *Nusrat Sháh* was assassinated A. H. 940, or A. D. 1533-4.



No. IX.

THE PAINTED MOSQUE.

THIS beautiful Edifice appears to have obtained the epithet of *painted*, from its walls being cased, both inside and out, with glazed bricks, wrought in different patterns, and coloured blue, green, and white. It was founded A. H. 880, or A. D. 1475, by *Yusuf Sháh*, son of *Bárbik Sháh*.



No. X.

A SMALL GATEWAY COVERED WITH A DOME.

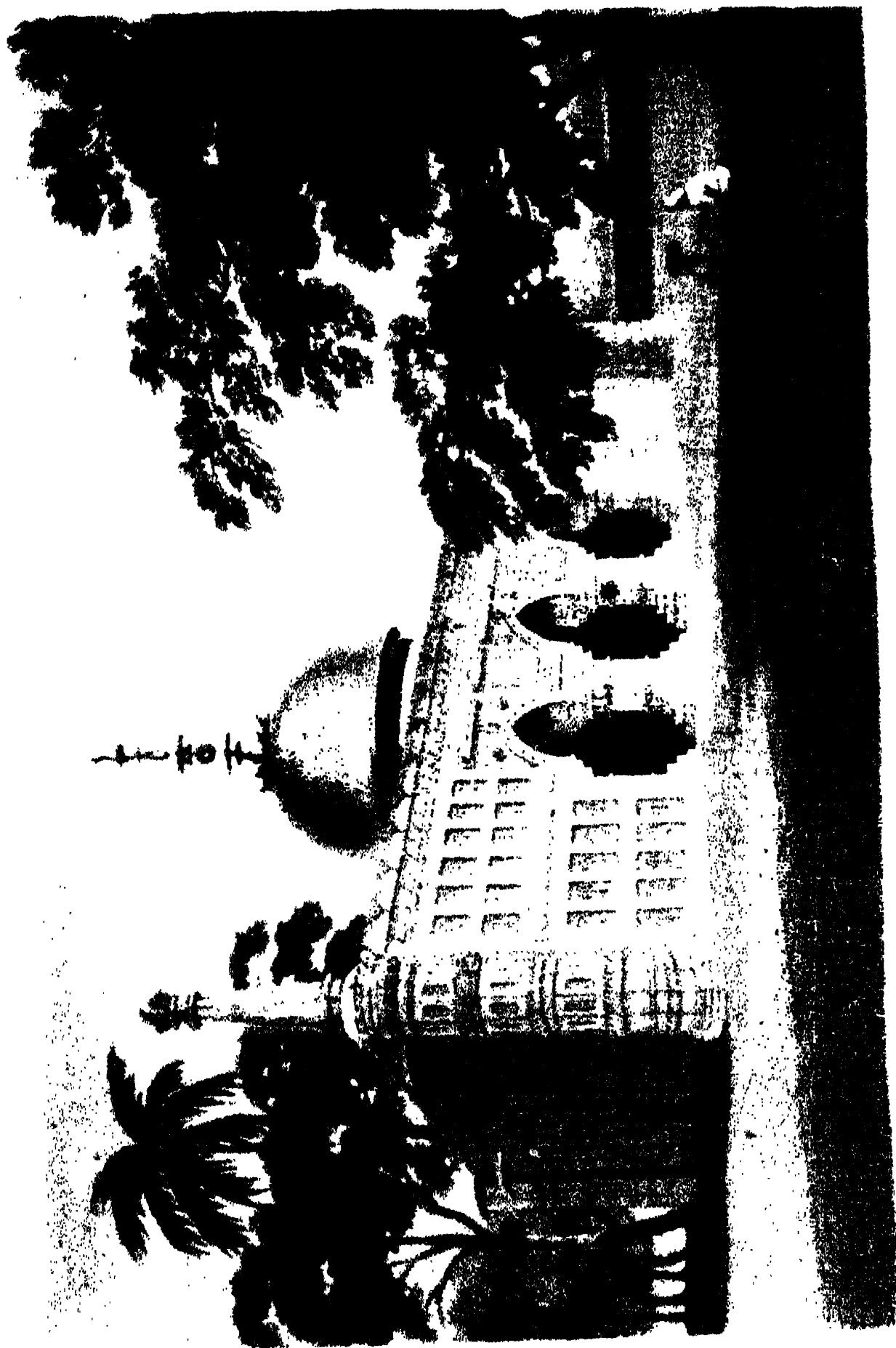
THIS Gateway leads through the rampart of the fort on the east side; and, from an inscription found near the spot, was probably built by *Husain Sháh*, A. H. 909, or A. D. 1508.



No. XI.

KADAM RASUL.

THIS Mosque has obtained the name of *Kadam Rasúl*, from a small stone deposited there, bearing the impression of a human foot, believed by the pious to have been made by *Muhammad* himself. This stone, it is said, was brought from *Medina* a great many years ago, was carried from *Gour* by the *Naváb Surájah Daulah*, and afterwards restored to its present situation by *Mír Jáfir*. From an inscription over the gateway to this edifice, it appears to have been founded by *Nasarat Sháh*, A. H. 937, or A. D. 1530. This building is kept in tolerable repair, and is still visited by pilgrims, because it contains the shrine of a celebrated saint. The situation of this Mosque is within the fort on the east side, at E.—See *Map*.



No. XII.

THANTY PA'RA.

THIS is a neat brick Mosque, covered with ten domes, and is eighty-seven feet in length. It seems to have derived its present name from its situation. From an inscription found near, it appears to have been built by *Shams'ud-din Yusuf Sháh*, A. H. 885, or A. D. 1480.



No. XIII.

RUINS OF A BRIDGE.

MANY bridges, like the one here represented, formerly existed, most of which have been destroyed for the sake of the bricks.



No. XIV

TOMBS AT THE SMALL GOLDEN MOSQUE.

THESE sepulchral Monuments are raised with massy blocks of hornblende, the outward surfaces of which appear to have been highly wrought and polished. They were probably intended to perpetuate the memory of the Founder of the Mosque, and one of his kindred.—See *Plates VI. and VII.*



No. XV.

CHAM KUTTA, A SMALL MOSQUE.

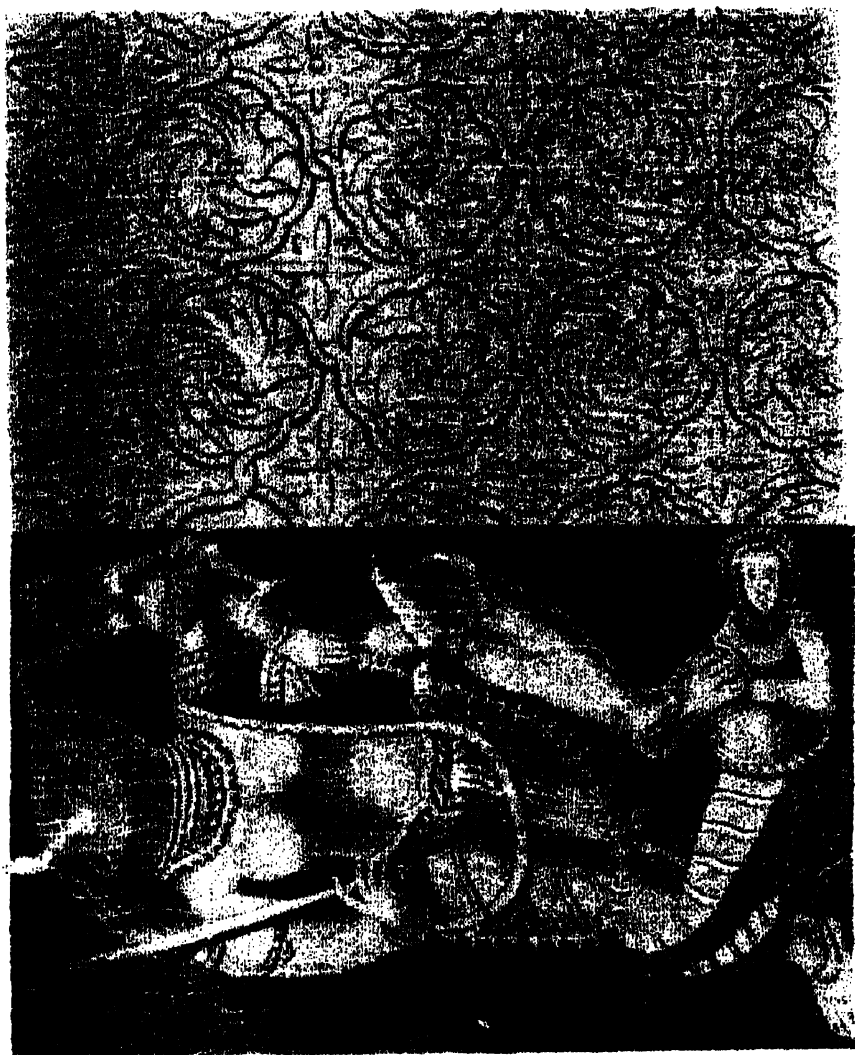
THIS building, they say, has been so called, because frequented by certain religious votaries, who wound themselves. The date of this ruin has not been ascertained. Its situation is a little to the east of the fort.—See *Map*.



No. XVI.

VARÁHA AVATÁRA.

THIS Plate represents the two sides of the same stone, being one of those taken from the inside of the small golden Mosque.—See *Plate VII*. The figure represented on the left hand, is that of the Hindu Divinity, *Vishnu*, incarnated in the Boar. It probably belonged to a temple, and appears to be of great antiquity. The carving on the right shows the other side of the stone. It appears to have been the general practice of the Muhammadan conquerors of India, to destroy all the temples of the idolaters, and to raise Mosques out of their ruins.



No. XVII.

SIVA'NI, A HINDU IMAGE.

THE figure here represented is said to be that of *Siváni*, the consort of *Siva*, one of the Hindu triad. The stone on which it was carved was also found in the small golden Mosque.—See *Plate VII*.



SHIVANI, A HINDU IMAGE

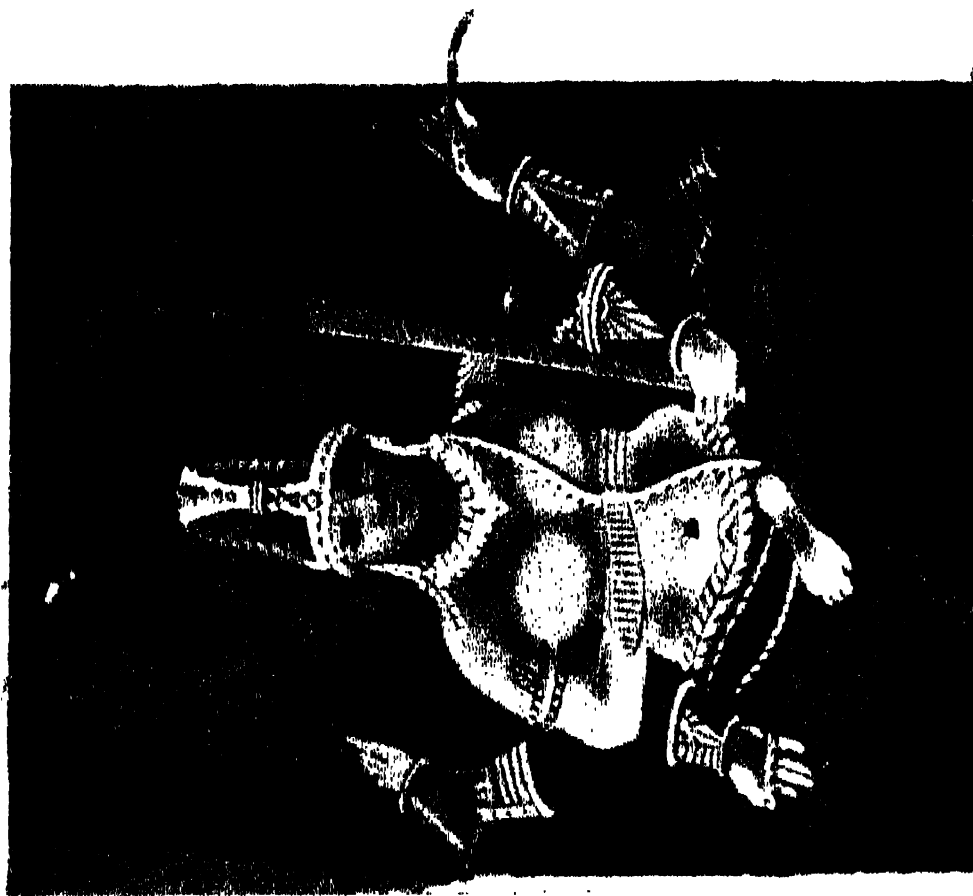
No. XVIII.

BRAHMA'NI AND BHAWA'NI.

THE figure on the left hand represents the consort of *Brahmá*, the first person in the Hindu triad; and, on the right, that of *Siva*, in the character of *Bhawáni*.—See *Plate VII*.



BRUNO
a little longer



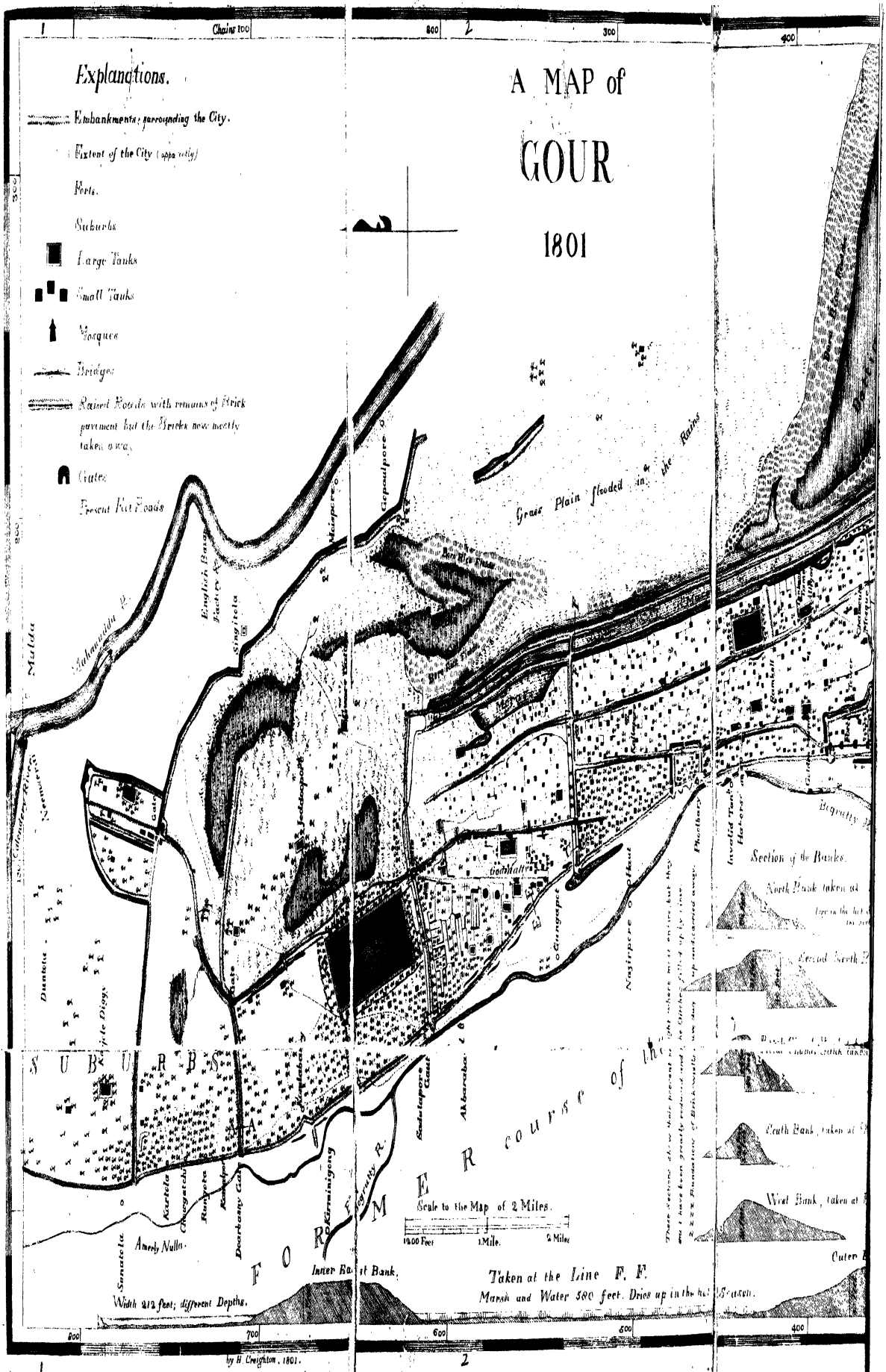
BRUNO
a little longer

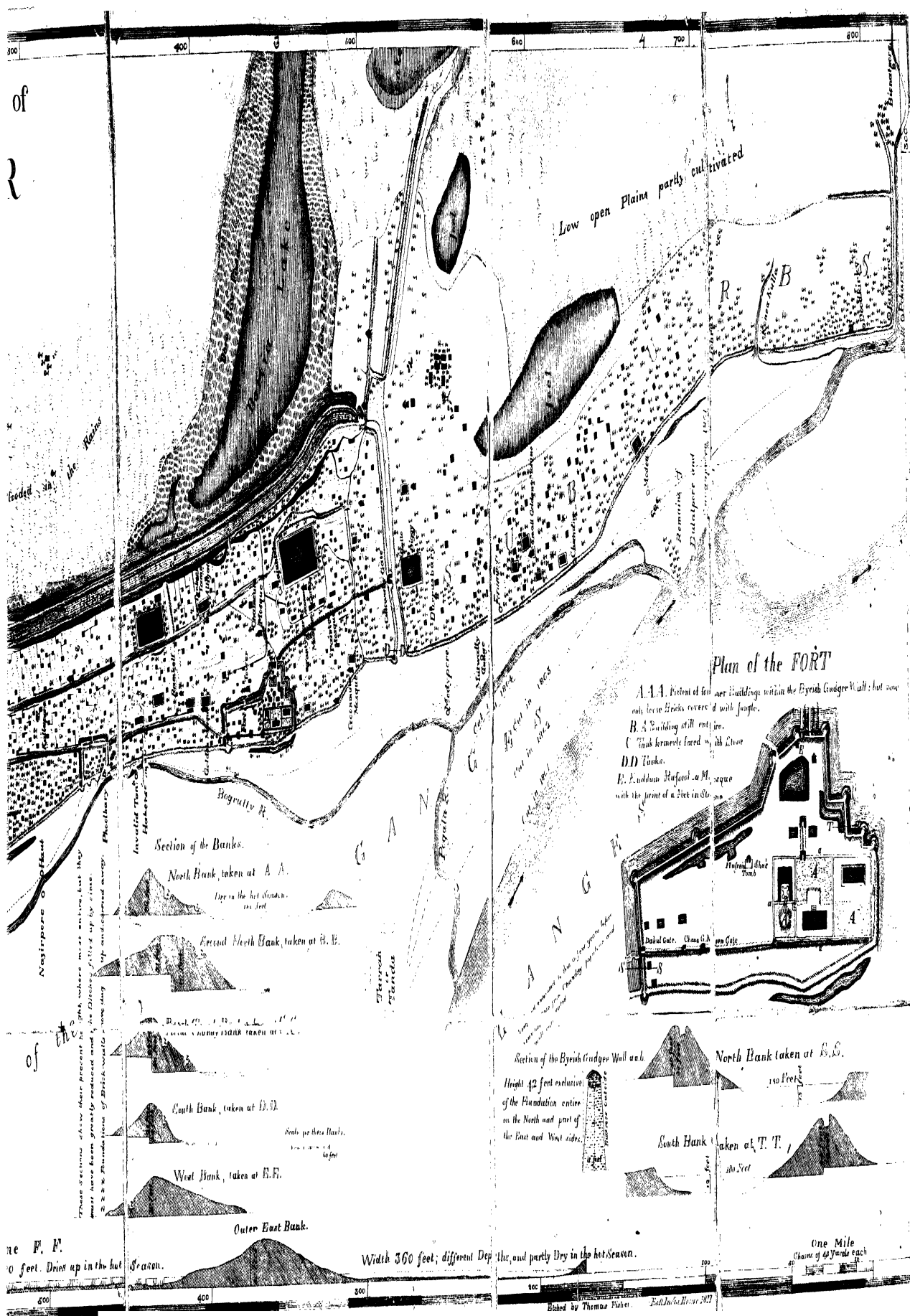
Explanations.

- Embankments, surrounding the City.
- Extent of the City (approx.)
- Ports.
- Suburbs
- Large Tanks
- Small Tanks
- Mosques
- Bridges
- Raised Roads with remains of Brick pavement but the Bricks now mostly taken away.
- Gates
- Present High Roads

A MAP of GOUR

1801





RAJSHAVAN
CALCUTTA

